

REMARKS

This amendment is in response to the Office Action of January 25, 2005 in which claim 10 was allowed and claims 17-19 were rejected.

Regarding the double patenting rejection, applicant encloses a Terminal Disclaimer with fee to obviate the double patenting rejection.

Withdrawal of the obviousness-double patenting rejection of claim 10 is requested.

Regarding claim 17-19 which are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as being unpatentable over Kou (U.S. 5,303,234), the Kou reference discloses a contention-based satellite system.

Although the independent claims are not specifically limited to contentionless type mini slots, clearly the present invention is mainly suitable for providing telephone connections and other services requiring a constant data transmission capacity for which the contention type slots used in the satellite system of Kou are unsuitable.

The mini slots (200) shown in Fig. 2 of Kou are sent upstream to the central station and are then subject to the possibility of collision if two or more terminal stations send a data slot 201 in the same time slot of the central station. An example of such a collision is shown in Fig. 8 of Kou where terminal station 2₁ and terminal station 2₂ both send data in the same time slot and the central station is unable to accept either. In response to the "corrupted" reception of data simultaneously from both terminal stations, the central station uses the unique word (UW) information provided in the mini slots 1 and 3 to allocate slot assignments to the two terminal stations which differ from each other. This is done in frame number 2 of the central station as shown in Fig. 8. In frame 3, terminal station 2₁ sends its data in the first time slot and terminal station 2₂ sends its data in

the third time slot. Obviously, this sort of a system would be unsuitable for providing telephone connections and other services requiring a constant data transmission capacity such as used in contentionless type time slots.

From the foregoing, it will be realized, especially when viewing the mini slots of Fig. 2 of Kou as compared to the mini slots 119 of Fig. 4 of the present disclosure, that the mini slots of Kou are incapable of carrying any reservation messages in their upstream transmissions. All they are capable of carrying is a unique word (UW) 204, a preamble 203 and a guard time 202. There is no space allocated for any message, let alone a reservation message such as claimed in claims 17-19. They are designed that way because they are contention-type slots.

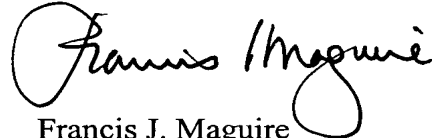
Thus, it will be realized that the specific limitation contained in each of the claims 17-19 that the mini slots are used for the transmission of reservation messages which the terminal equipment use for informing a central configuration that the terminal equipment wish to reserve data transmission capacity is absent from Kou's mini slots. While it may be true that the terminal stations of Kou "wish" to have data transmission capacity, this is made with the realization that any information sent may collide with information sent at the same time by another terminal station and a resulting failure will occur and retransmission will be required. Instead of using a random retransmission such as used in ethernet, the Kou approach is to have a central station inform the terminal stations which slots they can use after a collision has occurred. This occurs two frames later, which is an unacceptable delay for purposes of the present invention.

Support for the use of the claimed mini slots for the transmission of reservation messages may be found in the specification at page 14, lines 11-15.

Withdrawal of the 35 U.S.C §103 rejection of claims 17-19 is requested.

The objections and rejections of the Office Action of January 25, 2005 having been obviated by amendment or shown to be inapplicable, withdrawal thereof is requested and passage of claims 10 and 17-28 to issue is solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Francis J. Maguire". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "F".

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